

Aleutians East Borough Coastal Management Plan

Public Review Draft June 2005

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This revision to the Aleutians East Borough Coastal Management Plan (CMP) responds to state legislation passed in 2003 that required revisions to all coastal district plans. The revised plan must comply with new statutory requirements outlined in the 2003 legislation and new district plan criteria contained in Alaska Coastal Management Program (ACMP) regulations revised in 2004.

While most revisions to district CMPs occur over a three-year period, this plan was revised in less than a year. Time and funding limitations required a strategic approach that focused on developing an approvable plan that meets the requirements of the new statutes and regulations. New information about coastal resources and uses has been added to the revised plan.

1.2 Coastal Management

The Alaska State Legislature created the ACMP in 1977 in response to opportunities provided by the federal Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA). The ACMP provides the State of Alaska and its coastal communities two important benefits. First, provisions in the CZMA give the state the ability to influence federal decisions. Projects proposed or permitted by the federal government must be found consistent with the statewide standards and the enforceable policies of approved coastal district programs. This requirement gives the state and coastal districts a powerful tool to influence federal decision making. Second, the ACMP provides the state and coastal districts federal funds.

The first bill for a coastal management program in Alaska failed to pass the Legislature because it did not provide a strong role for Alaska communities. The final Alaska Coastal Management Act, passed in 1977, included a provision for the formation of coastal districts and development of local enforceable policies. As a coastal district with an approved coastal plan, the AEB has a seat at the table during state and federal decision-making for projects that affect coastal resources or uses.

The purpose of the federal CZMA is to assist the states in wisely using the land and water resources of the coastal zone, giving full consideration to ecological, cultural, historic, and aesthetic values as well as compatible economic development. The federal government provides funding and other types of support to the State of Alaska and other coastal states.

The legislature stated that the purpose of the ACMP was to protect natural and scenic resources, foster wise development in the coastal area and encourage coordinated planning and decision

making. Additionally, the objectives of the ACMP are documented at AS 46.40.020 and include the following purposes:

- The orderly, balanced utilization and protection of resources of the coastal area consistent with sound conservation and sustained yield principles;
- The protection of historic, cultural, natural, and aesthetic values and natural systems or processes; and
- The full and fair evaluation of all demands on the land and water in the coastal area.

Legislation enacted in 2003 and regulations developed in 2004 made some major changes to the ACMP. The legislation removed matters regulated by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation from the coordinated consistency review process. Additionally, it disbanded the Coastal Policy Council, a state-coastal district body that implemented the ACMP. The program was transferred from the Office of the Governor to the Department of Natural Resources. The regulations deemphasized the role of coastal districts and narrowed their ability to develop enforceable policies.

1.3 History of the AEB Coastal Management Plan

The original coastal management plan received state approval in 1985 before creation of the borough. An elected board managed the Aleutians East Coastal Resource Service Area (CRSA), a special service area created for the sole purpose of coastal management. Federal approval of the plan was delayed until 1989 due to concerns about language in the enforceable policies. The 1992 revision to the coastal management plan expanded the boundaries of the coastal district to match the boundaries of the borough.

The original plan received final federal approval in 1985 after two years of preparation and an extensive public participation process. The Aleutians East CRSA worked closely with village residents, state and federal agencies, and local officials. The original plan includes three volumes.

- Volume 1, Aleutians East Coastal Resource Service Area Conceptually Approved Coastal Management Plan, July 1985.
- Volume II, Resource Inventory for the Aleutians East Coastal Resource Service Area, April 1984.
- Volume III, An Analysis of Potential Development and Environmental Sensitivity in the Aleutians East CRSA, July 1985.

The 1992 plan amendment transferred administration of the coastal management program to the newly formed borough and added areas to the west and east of the CRSA to match the boundaries of the borough. The 1992 amendment supplemented the original plan by revising three chapters: Chapter 1: Introduction, Chapter 2: Coastal Area Boundary, Chapter 7: Boundaries, and Chapter 8: Implementation. In addition, the amendment provided a resource inventory and analysis for the two areas added to the coastal district, the Port Heiden/Stepovak Bay area to the east and the Krenitzen Islands and Aukan area to the west.

1.4 Public Participation

The original plan underwent an extensive public participation process including community meetings, news letters, a brochure, articles in newspapers, a public survey, and a public hearing. That public involvement process is described in detail in Chapter 2 of Volume I of the 1985 Aleutians East Coastal Resource Service Area Conceptually Approved Coastal Management Plan.

The short timeframe for the current plan revision and funding constraints required a strategic approach to public involvement. Because of funding limitations, it was only possible to visit the community of Nelson Lagoon during the review process.

The primary delivery of the plan documents was through the AEB website. The plan was posted on June 28, 2005, the first day of the 21-day public comment period. A public notice published in the Anchorage Daily News announced the start of the comment period. In addition, notification letters will be sent to a distribution list soliciting input on the draft plan, and the public notice will be posted in each village. The distribution list includes state and federal agencies, village and city councils, and Native corporations.

The consultant met with the AEB Assembly and Planning Commission on several occasions. The consultant met with the Assembly during a work session in Anchorage on December 15, 2004. On April 17, 2005, the consultant met with the newly formed Planning Commission by teleconference to discuss the draft plan, and on April 18, 2005, the consultant gave a presentation to the Assembly meeting in Nelson Lagoon that was broadcast by video teleconference to the communities in the AEB.

During the review of the plan by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, a public hearing will be held.

1.5 Description of the AEB

The AEB includes the tip of the Alaska Peninsula to the easternmost Aleutian Islands. It is bordered on the north side by the Bering Sea and the south side by the Pacific Ocean. Most mountain peaks are between 1,000 and 4,000 feet in elevation. Mt. Pavlof, a volcanic peak west of Pavlof Bay reaches an elevation of 8,262 feet. The Alaska Peninsula is separated from Unimak Island by the narrow waters of False Pass.

Commercial fishing and subsistence activities form the backbone of the economy of the borough. Almost all of the residents of the borough participate in commercial fishing, seafood processing or in providing services to the industry. The commercial harvest is comprised of salmon, herring, king crab, tanner crab, Dungeness crab, halibut, and groundfish.

Six communities are located in the borough including Sand Point, King Cove, False Pass, Cold Bay, Nelson Lagoon, and Akutan. More information about these communities may be found in the community profiles in Appendix A.

1.6 Plan Components

This plan includes six chapters. Components of the plan that are required by state regulation are noted in the description of each chapter, and the regulatory citation is provided.

- **Chapter 1: Introduction:** This chapter provides an introduction to the plan as well as a description of the public participation process (11 AAC 114.290).
- **Chapter 2: Issues, Goals and Objectives:** this chapter outlines the issues, goal and objectives (11 AAC 114.200). Issues are fundamental policy questions facing the district regarding management of natural and cultural resources and coastal uses. Goals are long-term desired outcomes that address concerns raised in an issue statement. Objectives further define a goal by providing more specificity and guidance. Strategies identify enforceable policies and other means to achieve an objective. Strategies are identified in bullets under each objective.
- **Chapter 3: Boundaries:** This chapter provides a brief summary of the boundaries of the coastal zone and the AEB coastal district (11 AAC 114.220). A full description of the justification for the boundaries is included in the original plan and the 1992 amendment.
- **Chapter 4: Enforceable Policies:** This chapter provides the AEB's enforceable policies (11 AAC 114.270). Projects undergoing a consistency review must be consistent with these policies.
- **Chapter 5: Implementation:** This describes the implementation of the AEB CMP (11 AAC 114.280). It includes a description of the organization of the districts (11 AAC 114.210), subject uses (11 AAC 114.250), and proper and improper uses (11 AAC 114.260). This chapter reflects changes to the ACMP made in 2003 and 2004.
- **Chapter 6: Resource Inventory and Analysis Supplement:** This chapter updates the original resource inventory (11 AAC 114.230) and resource analysis (11 AAC 114.240). The resource inventory provides information about coastal resources and uses and descriptions of major land or water uses, ownership, and areas designated under 11 AAC 114.250. The resource analysis describes demands on coastal resources and uses, expected impacts from uses, sensitivity of habitats and resources, and potential conflicts among uses. In addition, the resource analysis must describe why uses or resources are of a unique concern to the district.
- Appendix A: Community Profiles
- Appendix B: 1984 CMP, Volume II Resource Inventory
- Appendix C: 1985 Resource Analysis (Analysis of Potential Development and Environmental Sensitivity)
- Appendix D: 1992 Supplemental Resource Inventory and Analysis: Port Heiden/Stepovak Bay Area and Kreniizin Islands and Akutan Area
- Appendix E: Map 1 (1985) and Maps B, C, F, A, G, and M (1984 Resource Inventory)
- Appendix F: Most Environmentally Sensitive Area (MESA) Maps
- Appendix G: Coastal Resources Inventory and Environmental Sensitivity Maps (ESI)
- Appendix H: DNR Area Plan Regions and Units
- Appendix I: Alaska Department of Fish and Game Fish Distribution Database Atlas
- Appendix J: Boundary Maps